

From a professional point of view, the situation was interesting but alarming. Moving bow first, we barely advanced a couple of cable lengths a day. We had to consider the shoals at the approaches to the estuary, the numerous banks, and the limited choice of routes. We decided to move stern first. We were more successful. But to twice break a twenty-mile channel with the stern at a temperature of minus thirty-five, which freezes the open water, posed a danger to the screw and rudder assembly. Furthermore, it was contrary to operating instructions.

Meanwhile, the Chutkotka enterprises were waiting for the cement that they had ordered. The navigators suggested that at least part of the cargo should be transported to Cape Nikolai by helicopter. In support of their argument, they cite the experience of a similar operation during the last season of arctic navigation at Cape Billings and at other points of the northern coast. Furthermore, the Aleksei Chirikov is especially equipped for helicopter use. But the shore authorities do not agree: it would be too costly.

Your correspondent reached the supervisor of Anadyr' port, V. Matveev, by radiotelephone. He said:

In the clients' opinion, the helicopter scenario is not realistic. According to their calculations, the additional cost would amount to three hundred rubles per tonne. That cement would be as expensive as gold. The shipping officials are prepared to share the cost of unloading but they do not agree with the clients on the estimation of the cost. There are suggestions to continue the attempts to reach Cape Nikolai, to summon the help of the icebreaker Kapitan Khlebnikov whose draft is less...